

The AmCham Tax Committee

The AmCham Tax Committee represents the views and positions of AmCham member companies on tax-related issues. It strives to contribute regularly to the debate on tax-related topics with its members' expertise, mainly by commenting on new legislation and providing recommendations through position papers. It is one of AmCham's most active committees and over the years it has become a valuable expert partner of relevant public and private stakeholders.

Some of the committee's major achievements as well as its current agenda are introduced by its Chair, Christiana Serugová of PwC.

Leadership



Christiana Serugová,
PwC
Chair



Richard Panek,
EY
Deputy Chair

Members



BRIEF INTERVIEW



CHRISTIANA SERUGOVÁ
Partner, PwC

What led to the creation of the Tax Committee? What have been its major achievements over the past few years?

As taxes have a major impact on businesses, both those operating in the country and those intending to invest here, many years ago, AmCham created a special committee to provide a platform for members to exchange views on taxation and provide feedback and new proposals regarding taxation to the legislators.

Over the years, the Tax Committee has become a respected body and a partner for negotiations with the legislators, mainly via its active participation in the process of creating legislation.

As to the major achievements over the past years, I would like to mention the initiative for changing the system of accounting and tax penalties, which the Committee has driven. The accounting penalties have already been changed from the 3% of gross assets for generally any noncompliance with accounting laws to a system which reflects the importance of the breach. We are following this with efforts to change the concept of tax penalties as well, where the partial results will be implemented from January 2016.

We are also trying to introduce into the Slovak legislation concepts which have been proven to work well for the business community in more developed jurisdictions. We have been proposing the introduction of binding rulings into the Slovak tax legislation for many years and I am very proud to mention that after years of effort and work in putting together an analysis of different concepts used in different countries, binding rulings were introduced last September.

What are the main issues the Committee is currently focused on?

Right now, the amendment to the binding rulings legislation is being approved which enables businesses to ask for binding rulings in respect of wider tax issues. This amendment has been prepared by the Ministry of Finance based on the Tax Committee's continuous efforts to increase the scope of binding rulings.

Another current issue that we will continue to work on is the system of motivating tax penalties. We believe such a system would lead to better tax collection and, consequently, less need for non-conceptual tax legislation changes.

What are the Committee's current goals?

There are two current issues relating to taxation which we believe are critical for the improvement of the business environment in Slovakia. The first one is increasing legal certainty and mutual trust between businesses and tax authorities, which means, besides other things, having a regular plan of changes in tax and accounting legislation prepared and communicated in advance, introducing motivating tax penalties, including the business community in discussions during the creation of legislation, etc.

The other one is making Slovakia an attractive place for businesses with higher added value. To this end, the Tax Committee will continue to push for the introduction of holding legislation which would help make Slovakia a place that businesses want to be headquartered. We believe that Slovakia is already extremely well positioned for this, given the existing tax legislation as well as the presence of big shared service centers, but small legislative improvements are needed such as the introduction of a capital gains exemption that would complement the advantageous dividend taxation.

In addition, taking into account the focus of the government on R&D and start-ups, we are going to analyze and propose the introduction of so-called "patent boxes", special tax benefits for companies engaged in R&D. In line with the Nexus approach of the OECD, such tax benefits should be awarded to companies which physically perform their R&D functions in a country which provides tax benefits, and we would like to make Slovakia such a country.



More information
can be found at
www.amcham.sk